

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON YOUTH (CCJ)

12 August 2023

International Youth Day - Green Skills

English only

On International Youth Day, which this year is dedicated to green skills for youth, we celebrate all the young people who are actively involved with environmental and climate issues.

We welcome the Council of Europe youth sector's work on young people and climate action, and urge the Committee of Ministers to adopt the recommendations currently being drafted to protect youth climate activists' rights.

We also welcome the Reykjavik Declaration in which the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe member states underline the urgency of taking action to protect the environment, as a clean, healthy and sustainable environment is integral to the full enjoyment of human rights by present and future generations.

Moreover, the Advisory Council on Youth highlights the importance of meaningful and urgent action to achieve environmental justice and protect the rights of young people to participate meaningfully in decision-making responding to the climate crisis. For decades, young people have been pioneers in flagging the urgency of and acting on climate issues before political leaders and decision-makers.

The consequences of climate change are multifaceted and complex, progressively impacting different spheres of life. Young people are likely to be heavily impacted by the consequences of climate change and, as a result, eco-anxiety is increasing, negatively impacting young people's and children's mental and physical health, as well as their overall well-being. In spite of this, the younger generations are on average better equipped for combating climate change and should rightfully influence our shared societal responses.

It is imperative to provide young people with the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies for meaningful participation and action. Green skills are transversal and encompass the values, attitudes, knowledge, and abilities needed to live in sustainable societies,¹ they are obtained through formal and non-formal education, and foster active citizenship. It is a priority to continue developing awareness of issues on the road to sustainability and building the skills and competencies necessary for meaningful contributions to achieving the sustainable and just society goals, as well environmental social justice.

For the Advisory Council on Youth, green skills and climate justice are pressing matters for today's societies, not merely skills for the future. We call for a higher protection of youth climate activists' rights, the removal of barriers to youth participation in climate change-relevant decision-making processes, as well as access to climate-related information and resources for education on climate issues and activism.

¹ <https://www.unido.org/stories/what-are-green-skills>

We celebrate the youth workers, youth councils and (international) youth organisations who emphasise the importance of green skills and the empowerment of young people to practice their green skills to contribute to climate action.

The opinions expressed in this statement are those of the Advisory Council on Youth and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Council of Europe or its member states.